



Public Works

Kaleidoscope

A REFLECTION OF DIVERSITY IN PUBLIC WORKS

FALL 2013

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Making the Summit of South Sister

by Cathy Witt, PW Administration

For me, every summer is spent getting outdoors as much as possible. My family and friends like to plan several hiking trips that include the trails around Crater Lake, such as Garfield Peak and Mount Scott. We have made the trek up Black Butte a couple of times, climbed Smith Rock, and hiked from Yachats to Cape Perpetua.

This year brought talk of making the hike up to the summit of South Sister in August. I feared that I would not be able to make this hike, as this was on a much bigger scale than what I had experienced in the past. I was up for the

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Diversity Education at an Early Age

By Contrail Smith, Wastewater

Have you ever thought about how education about diversity tends to target adults and not much is mentioned about the education of kids on this topic?

Children meet people that are different than they are, yet they may not understand why.

We can start teaching them about diversity and help them understand why people may be different in some

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Diversity in Public Works

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challenge and turned to FitCity to help me get in shape and prepare. In the end of May I started taking Tabata Light and increased my workouts to include hills on the elliptical trainer. As August approached, it was now or never.

We were fortunate enough to have nice weather for the hike. We started at 7 a.m. The hike began in the forest where it was a little chilly. Then the trail opened up into a plateau with our final destination towering ahead. As we continued on, the trail became harder to follow as the climb was steep and covered with loose rock. As we reached the false-summit, we sat by a frigid lake to catch our breath and to gather our strength to climb the last stretch up to the summit. Each step was a challenge. The red pumice was slippery as you made your own trail up the steep climb. Reaching the top of the summit, it opened up with a plateau of snow surrounded by the rocky rim. The sky was clear and the sun was out, despite the chilly wind, we could see all of the rugged mountains around us as well as all of the lakes below. I had a sense of accomplishment as I stood up there enjoying the views and feeling gratified that I had made it!

The gratitude lasted only a few minutes though, as I realized a rigorous descent of loose rock lay between me and my sleeping bag!



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things but the same in other ways.

In a very simple way, we can explain to them how we all need sleep, and food to eat, and air to breathe.

Then you can explain how some people may have different foods they like or maybe they may enjoy different times of the year. While we are all alike, we can be different too.

By teaching our children about diversity at an early age we are giving them a stepping stone to enjoy all the world has to offer.

A great source for learning and teaching about diversity for young people is on the Sesame Street site:

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/topics/diversity>

Environmental Inclusivity at Public Works Offices

by Emily Aune, Parks and Open Space

One task of the Public Works Diversity Committee is to complete an environmental assessment of at least one public space within our department every year. The goal is outlined in the Diversity and Equity Strategic Plan (DESP), which states that the City of Eugene will "Ensure that City services are accessible and equitably provided." The City of Eugene recognizes that important messages and values can be communicated through our physical environment. As an organization, we want to welcome and accommodate an assortment of people.

To figure out what makes an all-inclusive environment, attention must be given in several areas. We want to ensure there is public transportation, appropriate parking, bicycle parking, and wheelchair access, just to name a few examples. Signs and directions to the public spaces need to be visible, written in Braille, and possibly in several languages. Within the actual building or room, artwork on the wall, furnishing, lighting, temperature, height of the desk, are all things that can send a message or feeling to people. Front office staff being friendly, available, and able to provide information in several languages are all resources we are hoping to provide for our community.

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To look at these topics in our department, members of the Public Works Diversity Committee fill out a questionnaire rating how well we are doing with these goals. Two years ago, we looked at the Airport, last year Wastewater and the Roosevelt Yard were assessed, this year, the Diversity Committee will look at the public spaces at Engineering and Administration. Perhaps workers at the Roosevelt Yard have noticed new, bright lines painted in the parking lot, and a new crosswalk. If you work at Wastewater, you will notice a lower sign-in desk. Enter the front office, and you will see diversity-themed artwork and brochures in several languages. There is still work to be done in all of these areas. Some improvements take more planning, time or money to complete. They have been documented, and teams are working to improve them. Let us know if there is some way we can help make your experience with the City of Eugene's public spaces more welcoming to you!



The Roosevelt Yard encouraged pedestrian access with a new crosswalk (top) and brightened the entry with some international images.



Three Men in the Kitchen

by Mark Smith, Engineering

In spring of 2012 during a lazy late afternoon, two buddies and I were sitting around reminiscing about our favorite foods we liked to cook. Jokingly, one of my buddies said "We should take turns cooking dinner". At first we laughed about it and then went right back into foodie conversation. The more we discussed food, the more reasons surfaced why we should cook meals together.

Cooking food for others is really gratifying—why cook for yourself when you can cook for others? A side note: we were either single or our partners weren't available on cook nights. I notice when cooking for someone

else or a group of people I'm more social, I enjoy cooking more and will put more energy into the ingredients, presentation and won't cut corners in preparation. When it isn't my turn to cook, I can learn someone else's style of cooking, different strategies for the same foods and add new dishes to my repertoire.

"When I thought cooking would become hard, in reality it was more exciting to cook dishes I never would have tried cooking for myself."

So early that summer we started cooking dinner on different nights. For example my friends decided to take Monday and Thursday night and I cooked on Tuesdays. The first couple of weeks we all showed off our favorite dishes, but as time went on we were running out of dishes we knew, we had to break away from our personal cookbook and learn new recipes. This is when I thought cooking would become hard, but in reality, it was more exciting to cook dishes I never would have tried cooking for myself. Curries, pho and stuffed peppers were just a few of the new dishes that we

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introduced to the lineup. During these nights of cooking away, we started inviting guests to come try some of the new foods we made—something wonderful about seeing people happily eating our food and involved in good conversation.

We were having so much fun with dinner night that we created a cookbook called “Three Men in the Kitchen Cookbook” and even took pictures of the finished dishes. It was a fun summer and fall.

Unfortunately, one of the friends had to start leaving town for work on a regular basis and the other decided to travel abroad for six months, so the dinners abruptly

ended in late fall.

Looking back on the three men in the kitchen era, we had good laughs and good food for all. I feel American society has taken food out of the social experience it should be. We too often eat on the run as though food is just an energy source. We eat fast food in the car and power bars during our breaks rather than making time to spend with others to share our knowledge, passion and interests. You learn a lot from the people you break bread with.

There is talk of getting Three Men in the Kitchen back together again soon.

“30 Days”: Another Reality

By Litahni Harlow, Engineering

Would you be willing to spend 30 days immersed in a lifestyle that you are unfamiliar with—and maybe even opposed to? What do you think you would learn by getting out of your comfort zone?

Well that is exactly the situation for the people in the reality show “30 Days”. The show was created by Morgan Spurlock who is the creator and star of the acclaimed documentary “Super Size Me”. The show takes normal people with strong viewpoints and puts them in living situations with others who represent a different viewpoint. Each of these subjects learns a valuable lesson about humanity at the end of their 30 days.

Some examples of the scenarios highlighted in this show are 30 days living on minimum wage, a conservative straight man moves in with a gay man in San Francisco’s Castro neighborhood, an atheist bunks with a Christian, a pro-choice believer lives at a pro-life maternity home, two materialistic Manhattanites roll up their sleeves at a sustainable eco-village, and so on. My favorite episode was one that highlighted immigration and took a man who was a self-appointed border guard and placed him in a home with an Hispanic immigrant family for 30 days. The outcome and lessons learned by both parties were touching and revealing.

Unlike many reality shows, which place people in uncomfortable situations just to incite petty drama and bickering, 30 Days’ lifestyle upheaval has a purpose: By putting real-life human faces on controversial topics, the show aims to open participants’ minds to all sides of an issue, hopefully bringing them closer to an understanding of how “the other side” lives. This show was first aired on FX in 2005 and ran for three seasons, which are now available streaming on Netflix.



PWDC MISSION STATEMENT

The City of Eugene Public Works Department is committed to fostering understanding, communication and respect among all members in the department.

We believe in a department that is accepting of everyone so that we capitalize on the strengths emanating from our differences.

By drawing on our individual strengths, we believe we can create an optimum and respectful workplace, one that can attract and retain a diverse workforce, allowing us to serve the community from which we come more effectively.

We believe that an inclusive diversity program is pivotal to reaching our professional potential, both individually and collectively.

GOAL

The goal of the PW Diversity Committee is to promote a workplace free of harassment and discrimination. We recognize and respect diverse viewpoints, cultures, and life experiences.

Would your work group like to meet the City's annual diversity training requirement by developing your own activity? You can!

Human Resources encourages teams to find relevant, engaging ways to discuss topics related to equity and human rights. Activities for potential Equity/Human Rights/Diversity requirement credit do need to meet some guidelines, but offer a lot of flexibility for you to find and explore topics in a meaningful way.

Considerations for activities to meet the requirement are:

- ❑ It should be an activity that creates new learning and insights, into equity, human rights and diversity issues.
- ❑ It should have a positive impact on your ability to more effectively do your job.
- ❑ It should create active involvement (talking to others, exercises that cause self-exploration etc.) not just passively attending an event.
- ❑ To meet the requirement it must be on paid time (minimum of 2 hours), and with supervisor approval.

Some examples of these activities are:

- ❑ Participation in the Equity Human Rights Board and resource groups over fiscal year
- ❑ Coordinate and attend a training for others within your organization/department/division
- ❑ Work with a public engagement event where you are active with citizens and community members
- ❑ Service activities like Food for Lane County (the first two hours paid, may volunteer after that)
- ❑ Be part of the community/HR Commission annual conversation
- ❑ Self-designed learning that has an E/HR focus (example: library staff spent a year learning sign language to support interaction with a fellow employee).

If you or your group have a training, service or discussion idea that you would like to pursue, contact the Human Resources Manager at x5731 with your ideas and questions.

Kaleidoscope is about all of us! If you have an adventure, story, book, movie, or other topic that relates to your understanding of culture and the diverse world we live in, write a few paragraphs about it and send it in so we can include it in our next issue.

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